

Message Text

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ACTION PM-03

INFO OCT-01 ARA-06 ISO-00 COME-00 SSO-00 SS-15 NSCE-00

NSC-05 INRE-00 CIAE-00 INR-07 NSAE-00 AID-05 IGA-01

TRSE-00 EB-07 OMB-01 /051 W
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FM AMEMBASSY BOGOTA

TO SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 9394

SECDEF WASHDC IMMEDIATE

INFO USCINCSO

C O N F I D E N T I A L BOGOTA 5978

E O 11652 GDS

TAGS MASS, CO

SUBJ: FY75 FMS LOAN FOR COLOMBIA

REF STATE 149824

1. MINDEF HAS SENT LETTER TO COMDR MILGRP STATING THAT TIME
FIXED FOR AGREEING TO TERMS AND AUTHORIZING SIGNING OF FY75
FMS LOAN IS TOO SHORT AND THAT UNLESS GOC CAN HAVE 45 DAY EXTENSION
OF DEADLINE TO PERMIT NECESSARY INTERNAL PROCEDURES, GOC WILL NOT
E ABLE TO AVAIL ITSELF OF OFFER.

2. WE ARE IN DANGER HERE OF SOME HONEST MISUNDERSTANDING THAT
CAN AFFECT OVERALL RELATIONS WITH THE MIL. THE COLOMBIAN MIL
HAVE ENDED UP WITH AN IRRITATED FEELING OVER THIS WHOLE
EXERCISE. THEY FEEL INTENSE PRESSURE WAS PUT ON THEM AND THAT THE
TIME GIVEN THEM TO STUDY AND UNDERSTAND A COMPLICATED AND NEW
PROCEDURE WAS UNREASONABLY SHORT. THIS FEELING IS THE RESULT
OF A COMBINATION OF THINGS: THE RELATIVELY LATE DATE ON WHICH
WE PROVIDED THE OFFER AND THE DRAFT AGREEMENTS FOR STUDY (APPROX
MID MAY); THE INTERNAL CRISIS IN THE COLOMBIAN MIL WHICH PREOCCUPIED
TOP OFFICIALS FOR MOST OF MAY; THE FACT THAT A NUMBER OF FACTS
THEY FELT THEY NEEDED TO KNOW ARE NOT YET AVAILABLE TO THEM,
E.G. THE PRINCIPAL REPAYMENT SCHEDULE (IN SHORT THEY DO NOT FEEL
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THEY CAN ADEQUATELY CLEAR THROUGH THEIR GOVT A DRAFT AGREEMENT

WITHOUT THE BLANKS FILLED IN); THE ABSENCE OF THE MINFINAN IN PARIS THROUGH THIS PERIOD AND THE GOC'S LONG, CUMBERSOME INTERNAL PROCEDURES. TO SOME DEGREE TOO, THIS MISSION BEARS SOME RESPONSIBILITY IN THAT WE DID NOT PERHAPS SUCCEED IN GETTING THEM TO INITIATE CONSULTATIONS IN WASHINGTON SOONER OR SUFFICIENTLY CONVEY TO THEM WHAT THEIR COMPLICATIONS INVOLVED. IN ANY CASE, HOWEVER, IT MAY APPEAR FROM THE WASHINGTON PERSPECTIVE OR IN COMPARATIVE TERMS, THE FACT IS THAT THE COLOMBIAN FEELINGS ARE NOT WITHOUT VALIDITY IN THEIR EYES AND IN THEIR CONTEXT.

3. IT WOULD BE A MISTAKE TO CONCLUDE THAT THE FAILURE TO SIGN THE FMS LOAN MEANS THE COLOMBIANS ARE NOT INTERESTED IN CREDIT ASSISTANCE FROM US. ON THE CONTRARY THEY DO WANT -- AND THEY DO NEED -- SOME EXTENSIVE REEQUIPMENT AND MODERNIZATION. WITH THE WORSENING SECURITY SITUATION AND INCREASE IN GUERRILLA ACTIVITY, THESE NEEDS WILL BECOME SHARPER AND MORE URGENT, E.G. TRANSPORT AND HELICOPTERS. THEY WOULD VERY MUCH LIKE OUR HELP IN ENABLING THEM TO PURCHASE EQUIPMENT. IT WOULD BE VERY MUCH IN OUR INTEREST TO BE RESPONSIVE.

4. THE ISSUE BEFORE US, THEREFORE, IS HOW ARE WE TO RESPOND TO EXPECTABLE REQUESTS OVER THE NEXT SEVERAL MONTHS FOR ASSISTANCE IN PURCHASING MIL EQUIPMENT IN THE ABSENCE OF A FMS CREDIT LINE. TO REACT WITH A QTE THEY HAD THEIR CHANCE, TOO BAD UNQTE REFLEX, WHILE POSSIBLY UNDERSTANDABLE, WOULD BE SHORTSIGHTED, PREJUDICIAL TO THE BASIC US INTEREST IN CONSTRUCTIVE RELATIONSHIPS WITH THE COLOMBIAN MIL, AND WITHOUT REAL VIRTUE EXCEPT AS CATHARSIS FOR OUR FRUSTRATIONS.

5. WE THEREFORE POSE THE FOL IN CONNECTION WITH HOW TO RESPOND CONSTRUCTIVELY NOW TO GOC REQUESTS FOR HELP WHICH WE ARE LIKELY TO RECEIVE:

A) SINCE THE MINDEF IN EFFECT ASKED FOR A 45 DAY EXTENSION OF THE DEADLINE FOR THE FY75 LOAN, IS ANY SUCH EXTENSION POSSIBLE? WE STRONGLY URGE IT.

B) IF NOT, WE PROPOSE THAT WE CONSIDER SOME KIND OF A CREDIT LINE UNDER FY76 FUNDS, AT A LOWER LEVEL THAN MIGHT DEFINITELY BE SET LATER, E.G. 50 OR 75 PERCENT OF THIS YEAR'S ALLOCATION
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UNDER CONTINUING RESOLUTION CONSIDERATIONS ADJUSTABLE LATER WHEN APPROPRIATIONS ARE KNOWN. WE KNOW THIS IS UNUSUAL AND RAISES PRECEDENT QUESTIONS, BUT WE STRONGLY BELIEVE THAT THE SITUATION WARRANTS IT, AND THAT IT WOULD BE IN OUR LONG TERM INTEREST.

C) IS IT POSSIBLE TO CONSIDER REQUESTS AD HOC ON A CASE BY CASE BASIS, WORKING OUT SOME COMBINATION OF FINANCING AS THE CASE MAY WARRANT?

WE WOULD APPRECIATE THE DEPT AND DOD'S SUGGESTIONS AS TO HOW WE
CAN BE RESPONSIVE AND HELPFUL IN THE RESENT SITUATION. VAKY

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